



phoenix

CIVIL WAR

PART ONE



BY OSAMU TEZUKA

Phoenix: Civil War: Part 1
Vol. 7
VIZ Signature Edition

STORY AND ART BY
OSAMU TEZUKA

English Translation by Jared Cook and Frederik L. Schodt
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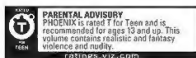
A message to our readership:

Some of the phrasing and expressions in the work you are about to read reflect the time and context in which it was originally created and thus might not be in accordance with present standards. The author had an unflinching dedication to conveying several themes through the art of manga, such as the importance of nature, love and peace; a warning against the idolization of science, and the preciousness of life. It is clear that at the root of his work there is a strong belief in the power of human love overall.

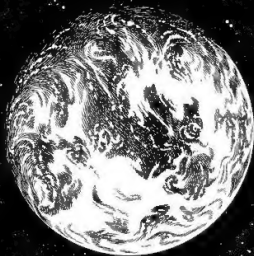
We believe that publishing a faithful translation is essential to accurately conveying the message within the work itself as intended by the author, as well as protecting its integrity as a part of Japan's cultural heritage and preserving it for future generations. We therefore appreciate your understanding as you enjoy this work of art.

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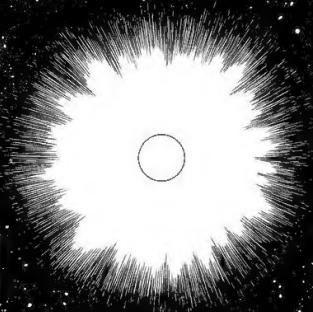
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IN A
DISTANT
CORNER
OF THE
UNIVERSE,
ON A TINY
CLUMP OF
STARDUST
...



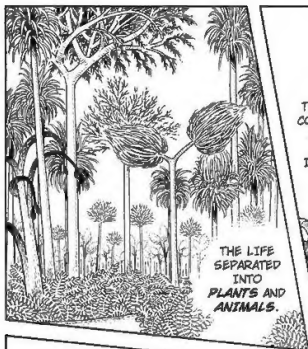
...THERE
WAS *LIFE*,
AND IT
CLUNG TO
EXISTENCE
LIKE MOSS
ON A
ROCK...

IN THE SHORT SPAN
OF THE LITTLE PLANET'S
EXISTENCE, THIS LIFE HAD
ALREADY CHANGED FORM
DRAMATICALLY, AND BECOME
INCREASINGLY COMPLEX.



IT WAS ALL
PART OF A
BIOLOGICAL
PROCESS THAT
HUMANS CALL
"EVOLUTION".

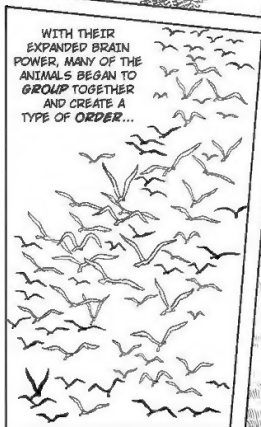




THE LIFE
SEPARATED
INTO
PLANTS AND
ANIMALS.



THE ANIMALS
CONTINUED TO
EVOLVE AT
AN EVER
INCREASING
PACE...

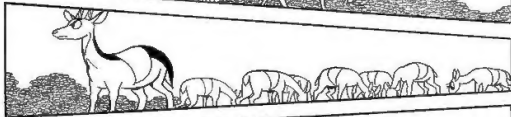
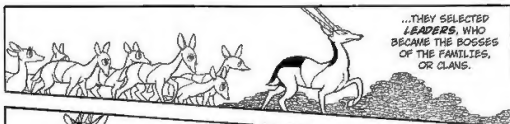


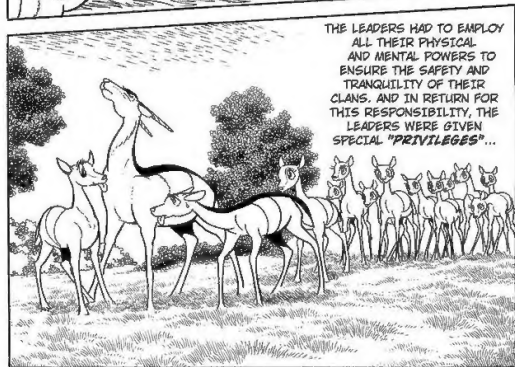
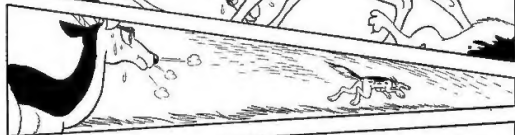
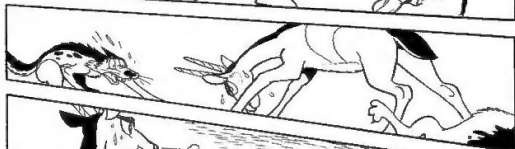
WITH THEIR
EXPANDED BRAIN
POWER, MANY OF THE
ANIMALS BEGAN TO
GROUP TOGETHER
AND CREATE A
TYPE OF **ORDER**...



AT FIRST
THESE "GROUPS"
WERE MERELY
FAMILIES, LINKED
BY A SHARED
BLOODLINE...

...BUT IN
ORDER TO
ENSURE
THE SAFETY
OF THEIR
OFFSPRING





THE LEADERS HAD TO EMPLOY
ALL THEIR PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL POWERS TO
ENSURE THE SAFETY AND
TRANQUILITY OF THEIR
CLANS. AND IN RETURN FOR
THIS RESPONSIBILITY, THE
LEADERS WERE GIVEN
SPECIAL "PRIVILEGES"...



IT WAS THE
SAME, TOO, FOR
THE CREATURES
CALLED
HUMAN
BEINGS.

phoenix

TM



**B
O
M**

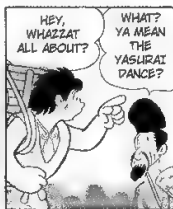
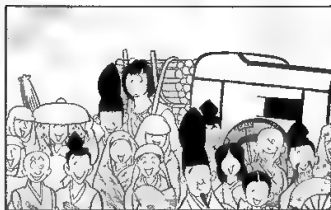
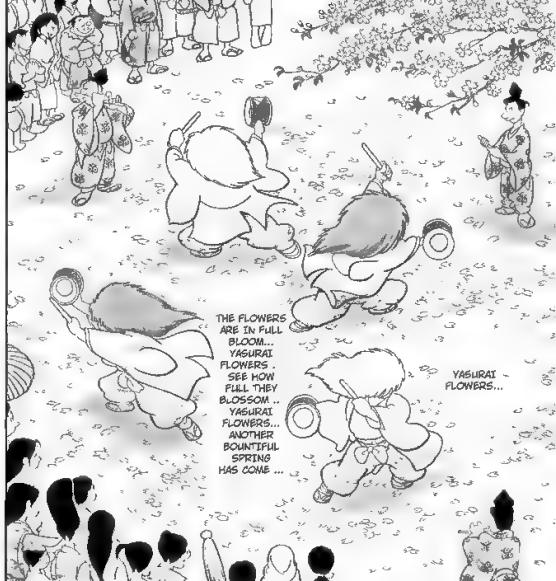
**RAT
TA
TAT**

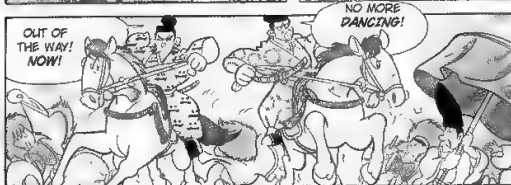
**B
O
M**

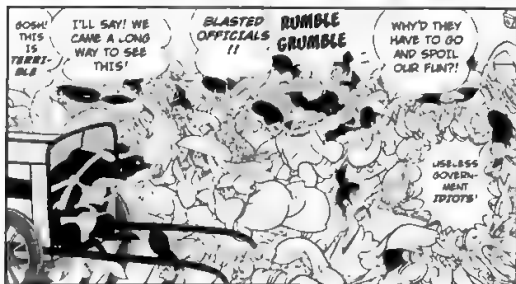


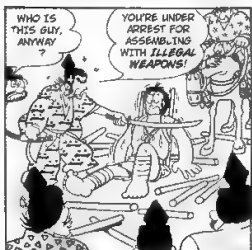
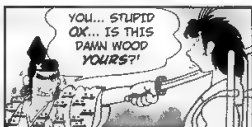
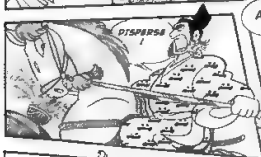
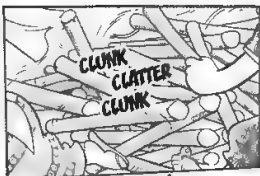
**B
O
M**

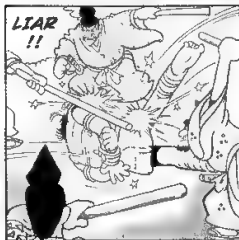
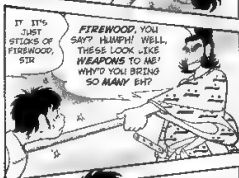
**B
O
M
B
O
M**

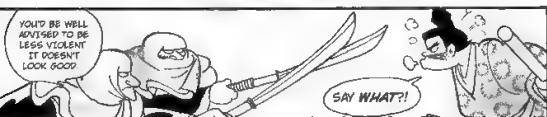
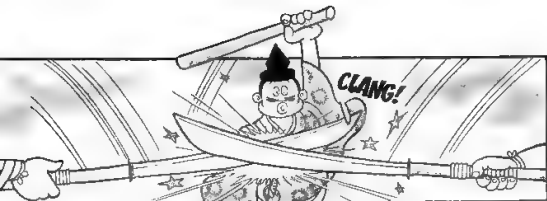


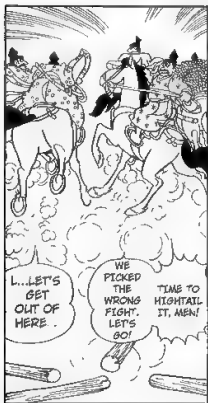


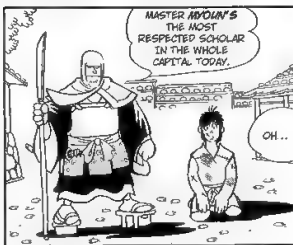
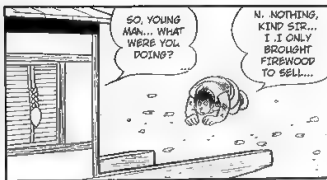


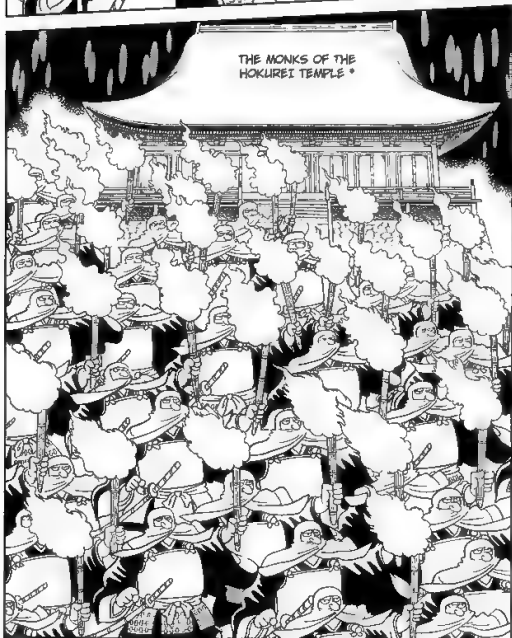




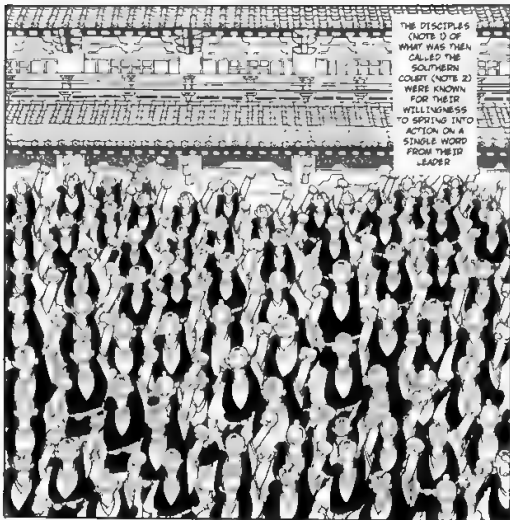








* NOTE. HOKUREI IS ANOTHER NAME FOR ENRYAKU-JI TEMPLE, LOCATED ON MT. HIEI-ZAN IN KYOTO



THE DISCIPLES
(NOTE 1) OF
WHAT WAS THEN
CALLED THE
SOUTHERN
COURT (NOTE 2)
WERE KNOWN
FOR THEIR
WILLINGNESS
TO SPRING INTO
ACTION ON A
SINGLE WORD
FROM THEIR
LEADER



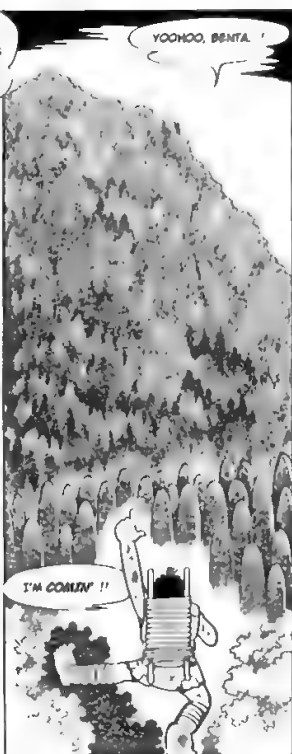
NOT ONLY
DID MYOUN
POSSESS
GREAT
POLITICAL
POWER BUT
HE WAS ALSO
A GREAT
POET



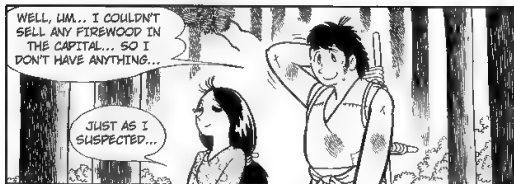
AND HE WAS A
GIFTED ARTIST
HE EVEN DREW
CARTOONS

NOTE 1: IN ANCIENT TIMES "TRAINING TO BE A BUDDHIST" MONK WAS THE QUICKEST WAY TO
BECOME EDUCATED AND TEMPLES WERE THE EQUIVALENT OF TODAY'S UNIVERSITIES
NOTE 2: TEMPLE TO THE GREAT TEMPLE IN NARA CALLED KORYUJI ALSO KNOWN AS TODOKUJI
ONE OF THE LARGEST WOODEN STRUCTURES IN THE WORLD

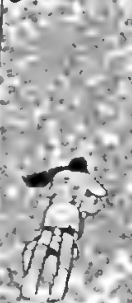


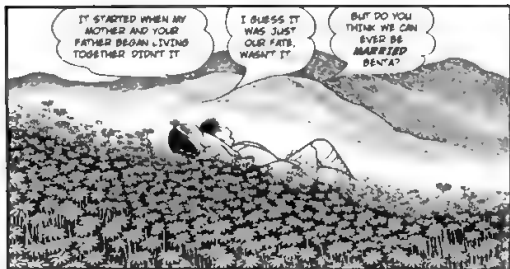




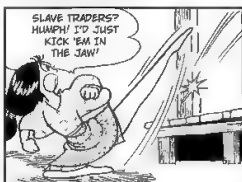
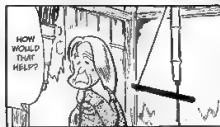




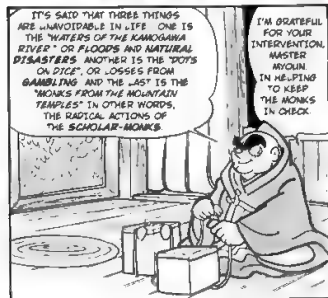
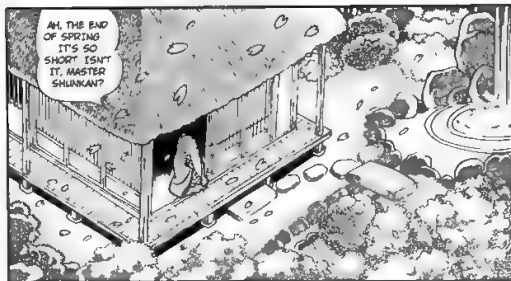














AND
THAT'S
THE
POINT!



THE TAIRA CLAN IS
CLEARLY THE CAUSE OF
THE GOVERNMENT'S
DECAY AND
CORRUPTION TODAY



AND EVERYONE
KNOWS THAT
KIYOMORI IS
PARTICULARLY
RESPONSIBLE!



IN FACT, SEVERAL OF
OUR FRIENDS ARE
ALREADY PLANNING TO
KILL KIYOMORI AND
DESTROY HIS CLAN!



WELL,
THAT'S
RATHER
VIOLENT,
ISN'T
IT



MASTER
MYOUN

I'M ONLY
TELLING YOU THIS
BECAUSE
I TRUST
YOU.



THE MONKS
HAVE
COMPLETE
FAITH IN
YOU. IF YOU
WILL JOIN
WITH US...

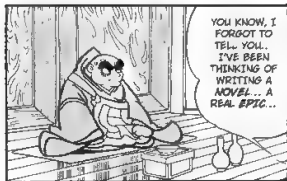
..THE
TEMPLES,
THE MONKS,
AND ALL OF
THE DISCIPLES
WILL
RISE UP EN
MASSE!!!



AH, BUT I
CANNOT
AGREE TO
SOMETHING
THAT WILL
ONLY
CREATE
MORE
CHAOS...



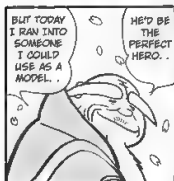
LET US
PRETEND
THAT THIS
CONVER-
SATION
NEVER TOOK
PLACE
MASTER
SHUNKAN...



YOU KNOW, I FORGOT TO TELL YOU... I'VE BEEN THINKING OF WRITING A NOVEL... A REAL EPIC...



SOMETHING THAT MAKES FUN OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT... I JUST HAVEN'T COME UP WITH A GOOD MAIN CHARACTER UNTIL NOW...



BUT TODAY I RAN INTO SOMEONE I COULD USE AS A MODEL...

HE'D BE THE PERFECT HERO...



MASTER SHUNKAN, THERE'S A PHONE CALL FOR YOU FROM LORD FUJIWARA NARICHIKA.

HIS NAME'S BENTA. HE LIVES IN THE MOUNTAINS AND HE HAS A REALLY FUNNY-LOOKING FACE

I'M THINKING OF USING HIM AS THE MODEL FOR A HUGE, ROUGH MOUNTAIN MONK... A MONK I'D CALL **BENKET...**

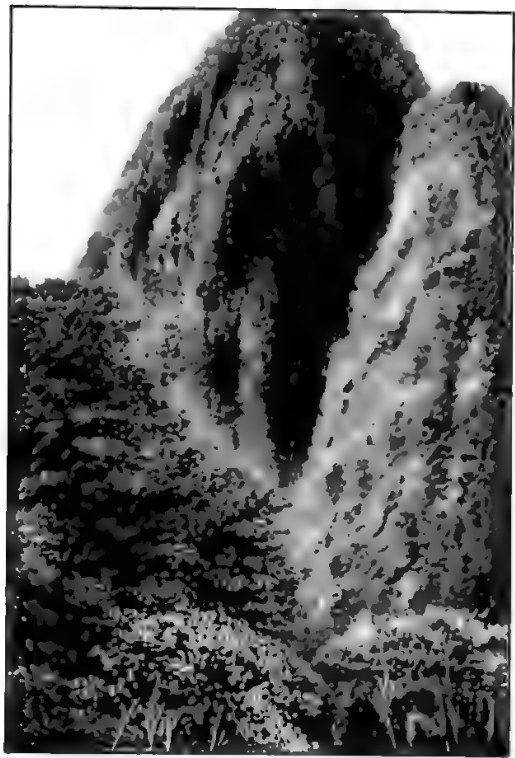


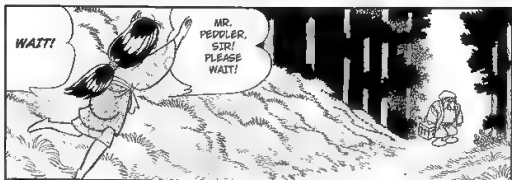
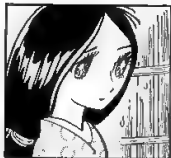
HELLO? YES, THIS IS SHUNKAN SPEAKING.

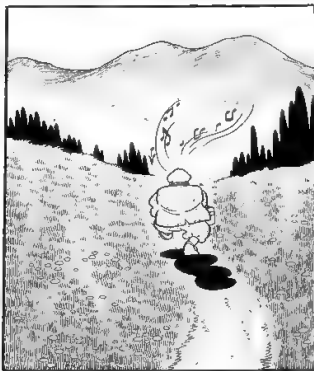


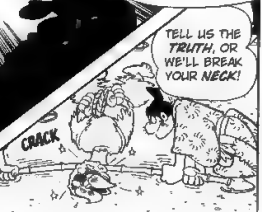
WHAT? YOU LOST A COMB?

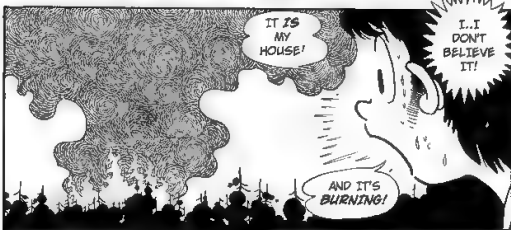
HMM... THAT'S NOT GOOD YOU'RE BEING WATCHED BY THE POLICE, YOU KNOW.

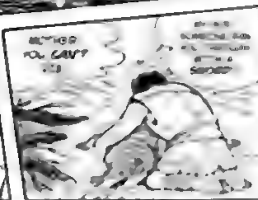














WAIT! WHERE'S
OBU?!

OBU!!
WHERE
ARE YOU?!

OBU
!!!



YOU FIENDS
DID THIS,
DIDN'T YOU!!?
YOU KILLED
MY MOTHER
AND FATHER!!
WHY?!



SO...
YOU
USED
TO
LIVE
HERE,
TOO,
EH?

THEN LISTEN UP,
PEASANT! A CERTAIN
VALUABLE COMB WAS
FOUND IN THIS
HOUSE, A COMB
BELONGING TO
SOMEONE ON THE
GOVERNMENT'S
BLACK
LIST!



B...BUT THE
COMB'S
FROM
THE

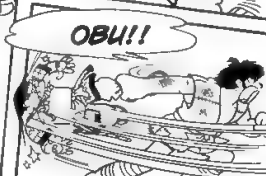
SILENCE!
ANYONE
FROM THIS
HOUSEHOLD IS
AN ACCOMPLICE
OF THE BLACK-
LISTED
VILLIAN.

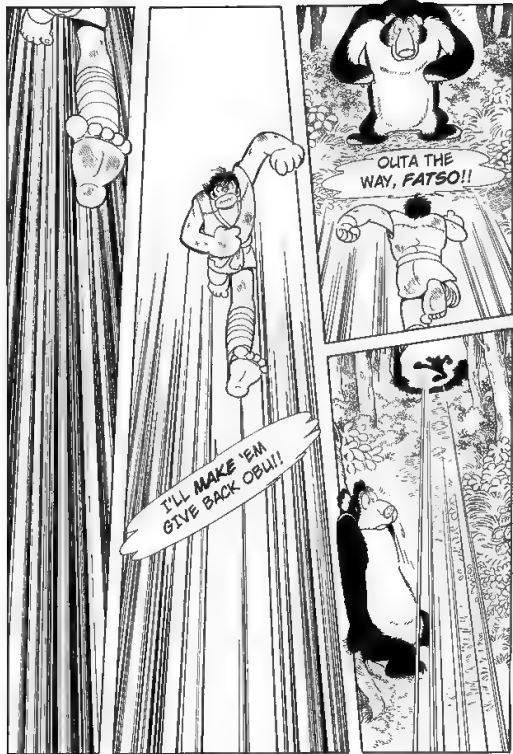


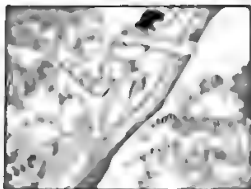
SO, WE'VE NO
CHOICE BUT TO
HACK YOU TO
PIECES!!
PREPARE TO
DIE, BUMPKIN!

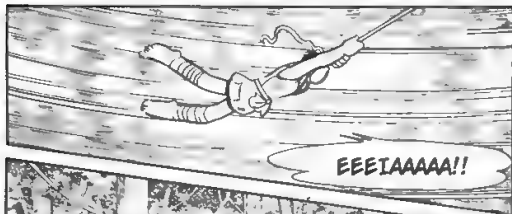
NOT
SO
FAST...

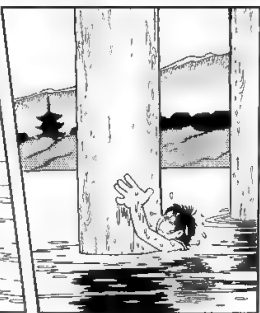


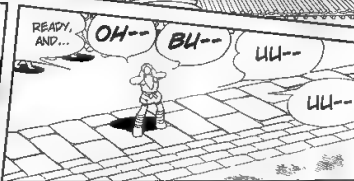
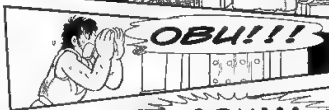
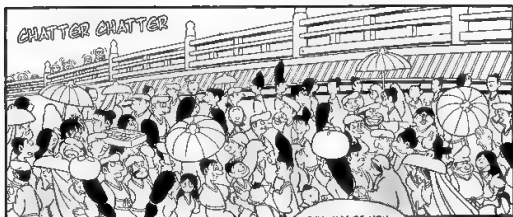


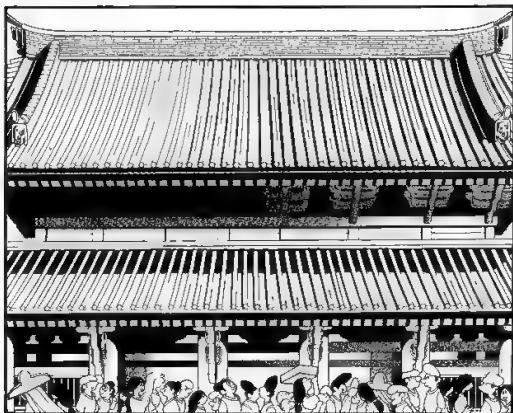


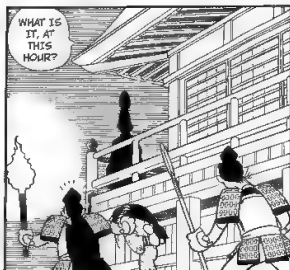
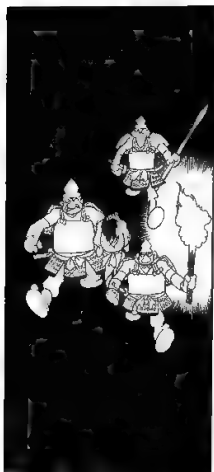






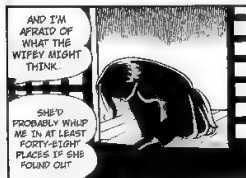
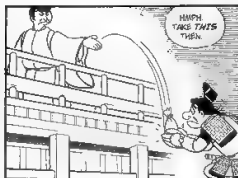








JUST FAKE
AN EXECU-
TION.

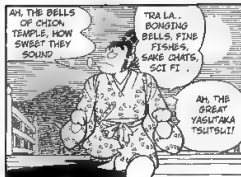
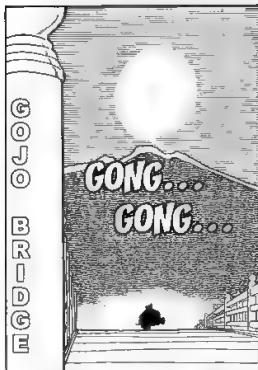












AH, THE BELLS
OF CHION
TEMPLE, HOW
SWEET THEY
SOUND

TRA LA,
BONGING
BELLS, FINE
FISHES,
SAKE CHATS,
SCI FI.

AH, THE
GREAT
YASUTAKA
TSUTSUI!



HALT!!

WHA?!
WHO'RE
YOU?!



YER ONE OF
THOSE
SANKURAI
WHO SERVES
THE
OFFICIALS.
RIGHT?!

WELL,
GIMME BACK
MY OBU!!

TELL ME
WHERE SHE
IS. NOW!!

OBU? NEVER
HEARD OF
ANYONE
WITH THAT
NAME...

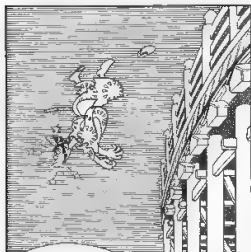
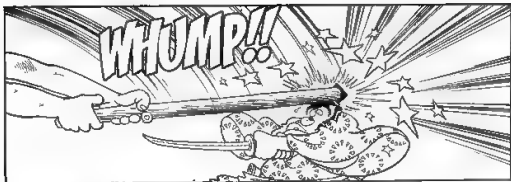


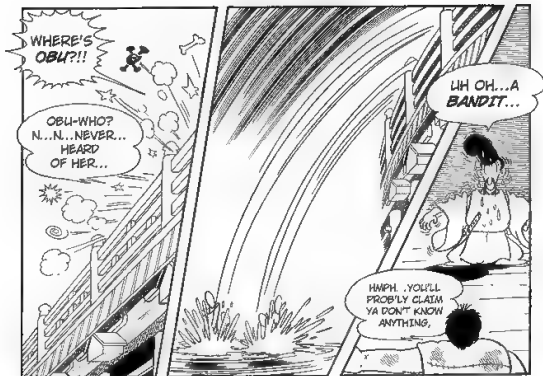
BLAST
IT..
WELL, I'LL
MAKE
YOU TELL
ME!

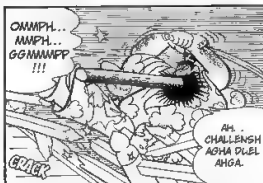
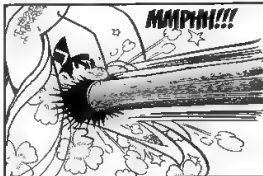
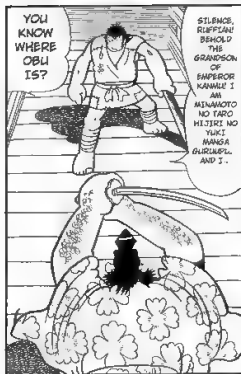
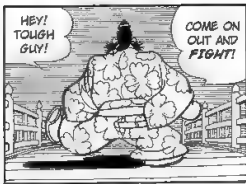


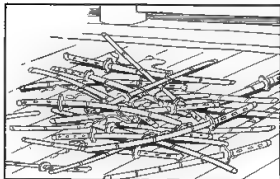
WH... WHA..
WHAT THE?!

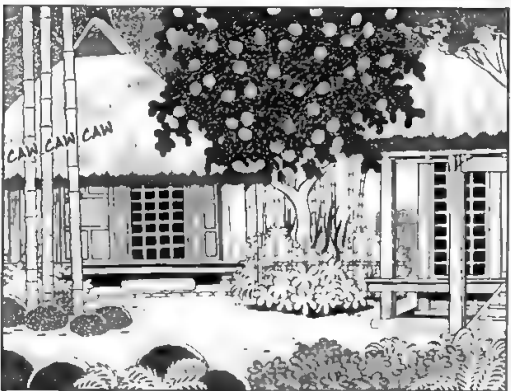
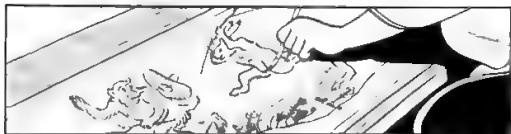
Y... YOU
REALLY THINK
YOU CAN TAKE
ME ON, EH?!

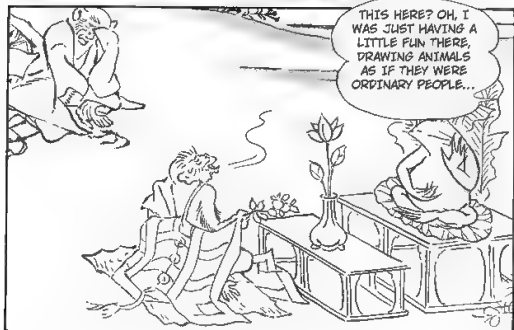


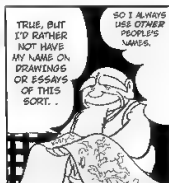
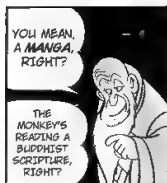


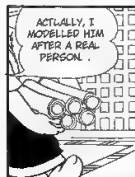




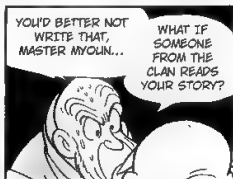


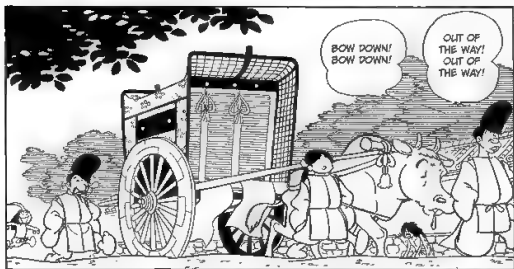
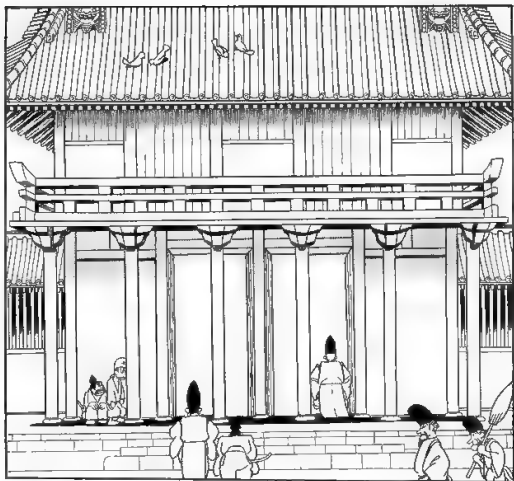


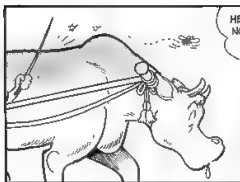




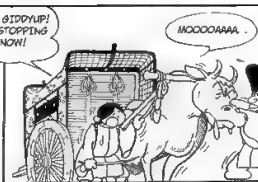
*EIZAN IS ANOTHER NAME FOR ENRYAKU-JI TEMPLE ON MT. MIE-ZAN. ACCORDING TO THE ORIGINAL LEGEND OF BENKEI, HE HAD BEEN TAUGHT THERE BY THE BISHOP SAITO SAKURA.







HEY, BIDDY UP!
NO STOPPING
NOW!

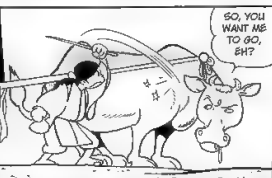


MOOOOAAAAA...



HURRY UP!
MAKE HIM
MOVE!

GET
ALONG
THERE!
GO!



SO, YOU
WANT ME
TO GO,
EH?



OH
NO...HE
WENT...!

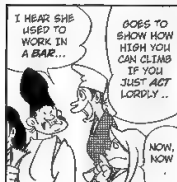
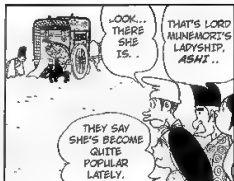


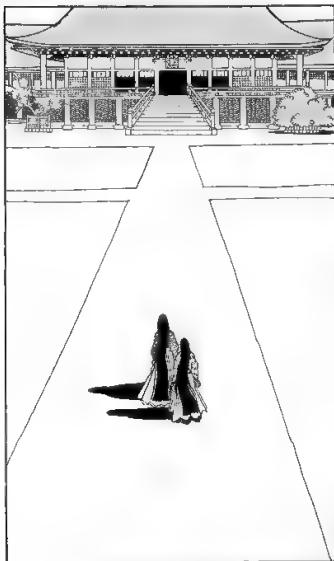
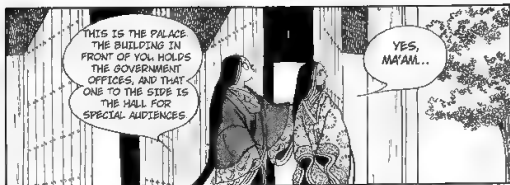
WE'VE
ARRIVED AT
THE PALACE,
YOUR
LADYSHIP...

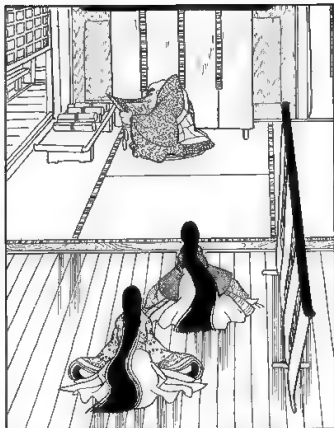
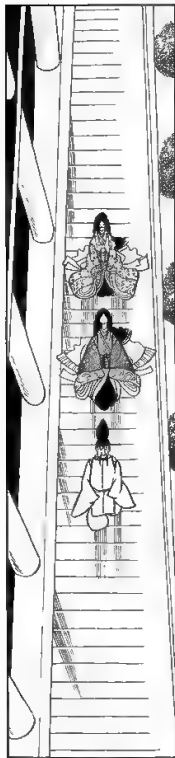


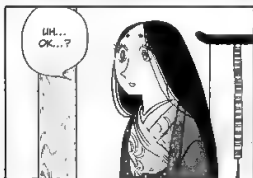
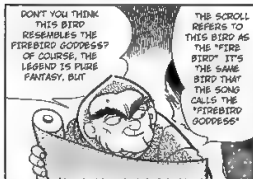
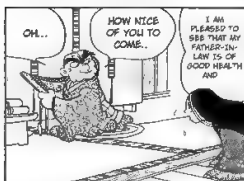
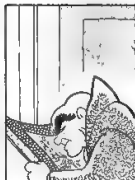
SANI-
TATION
PATROL
!!

COMING...!











DO YOU UNDERSTAND
WHAT THIS MEANS?
IT MEANS ANYONE
WHO DRINKS THIS
BIRD'S BLOOD WILL
BECOME IMMORTAL!

PRETTY
GOOD,
EH?



AND
THAT'S
NOT
ALL...

THERE'S EVIDENCE
THAT THIS BIRD
LIVED NOT ONLY IN
CHINA BUT IN JAPAN
AS WELL!



WE'RE FORTUNATE
TO BE TRADING
WITH THE SONG
OTHERWISE,
WE'D NEVER
HAVE LEARNED
THIS

AH! TO GET A
GLIMPSE OF
THIS BIRD OF
FIRE!
WOULDN'T
THAT BE
SOMETHING!?



I SPENT THIRTY
YEARS WORKING
LIKE A DOG TO
ENSURE THE
WEALTH AND
PROSPERITY OF
MY CLAN.

BUT SINCE I
BECAME ILL
FOUR YEARS
AGO, I'VE HAD
THIS FEELING
THAT I WON'T BE
AROUND MUCH
LONGER.

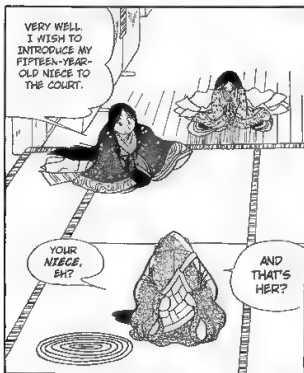


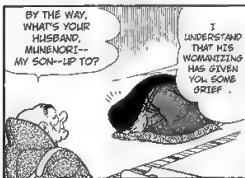
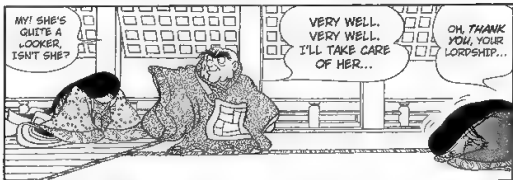
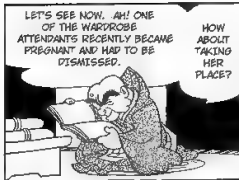
I CAN'T
STOP
THINKING
ABOUT MY
DEATH...
...AND
WHEN MY
TIME WILL
COME...

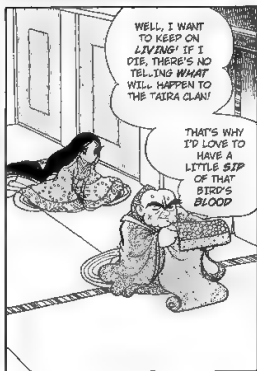


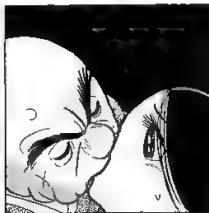
SO NOW,
I'VE
BECOME
OBSESSED
WITH THIS
FIREBIRD...

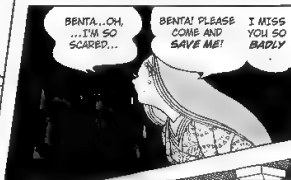
IT REALLY
SHOWS HOW
OLD AND
DECREPIT
I'VE
BECOME.

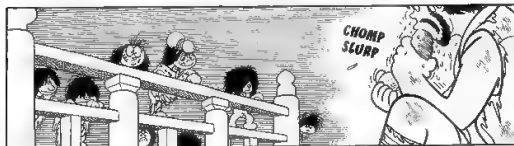
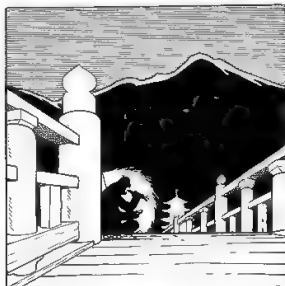
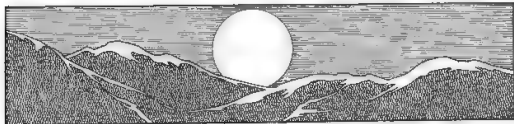














I KNOW OBU'S
STILL ALIVE
SOMEWHERE!
SHE'S
SOMEWHERE IN
THE CAPITAL!!

AN' SOMEDAY
I'M GONNA FIND
HER! I KNOW
I WILL!

YEAH, IT'S AN
ASSOCIATION FOR
WAR-ORPHANS LIKE
ME WHO'VE HAD
THEIR PARENTS
KILLED AND THEIR
HOUSES BURNED
DOWN BY CRAZY
SAMURAI!

BEGGAR'S
ASSOCIATION?

HEY,
BENTA, WHY
DON'T YOU
JOIN OUR
BEGGARS'
ASSOCIATION.

WELL, YER PARENTS
WERE KILLED BY
SAMURAI, AND YER
HOUSE WAS BURNED
DOWN, RIGHT? HEY,
YER MORE THAN
QUALIFIED!

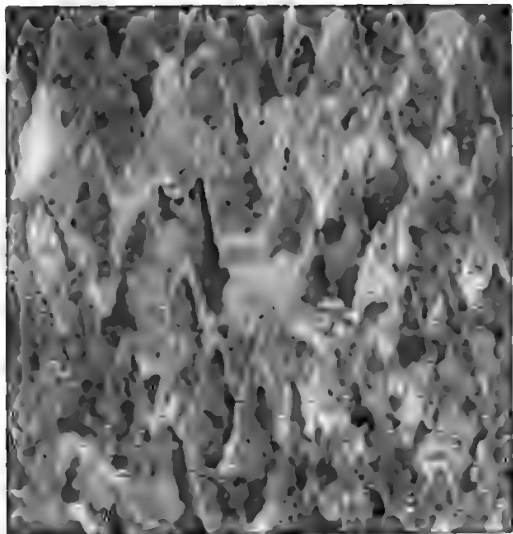
YOU'VE
GOTTA BE
KIDDING!!

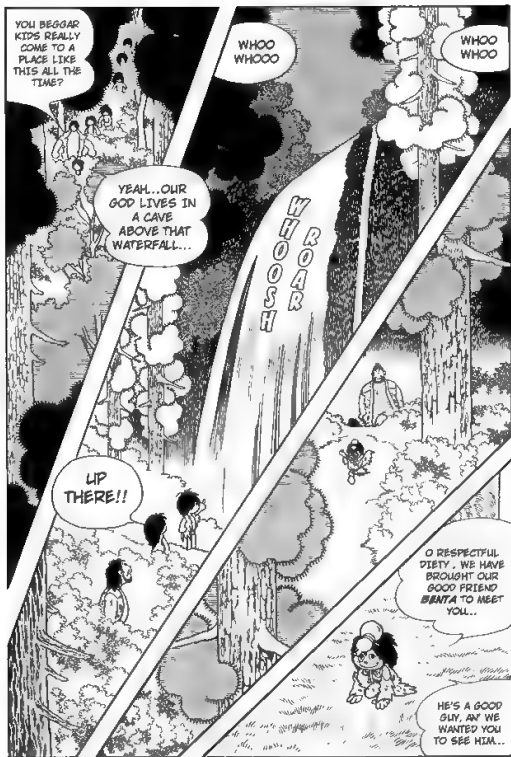
THERE'S
ALWAYS GONNA
BE FIGHTING
AS LONG AS
THERE'S
SAMURAI LIKE
THAT AROUND

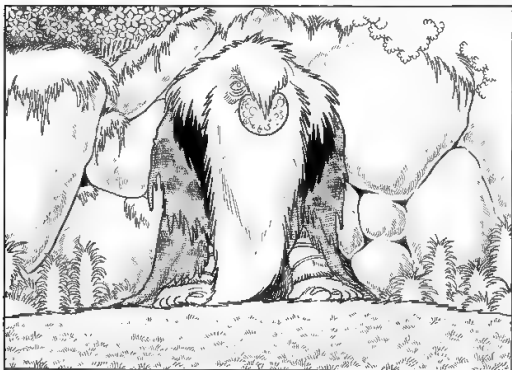
THEY EVEN SAY
ANOTHER BIG WAR'S
COMING AN' IT'LL
BE STARTED BY
PEOPLE WHO HATE
THE TAIRA CLAN, LIKE
LOTS OF THE NOBLES
AND PEOPLE IN THE
GENJI CLAN...

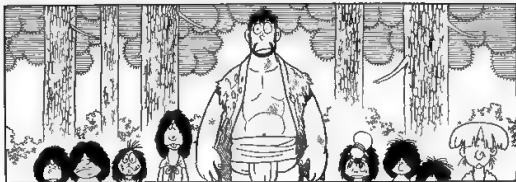
SO WE FIGURED
WE OUGHTA PUT
TOGETHER AN
ASSOCIATION
FOR BEGGARS,
SO WE CAN HELP
EACH OTHER OUT
WHEN THE TIME
COMES.

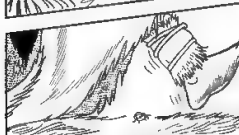
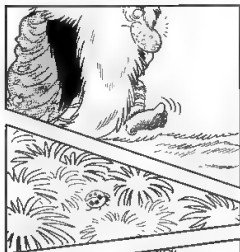






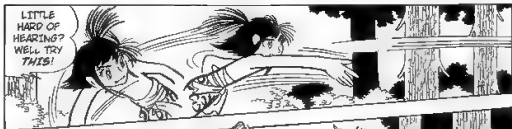
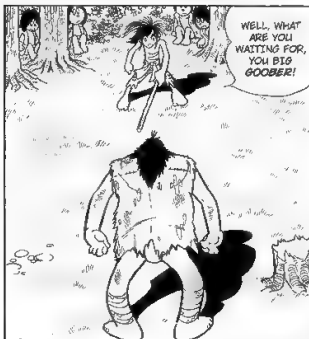


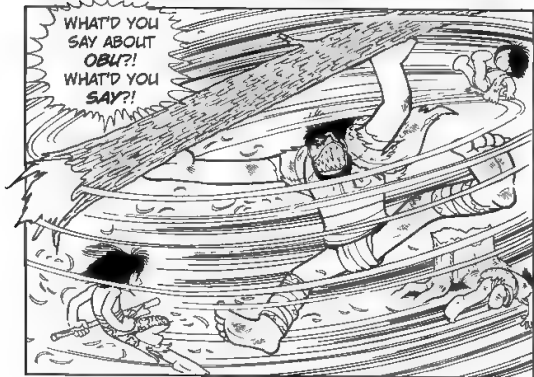
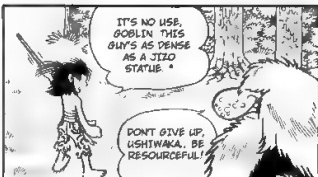




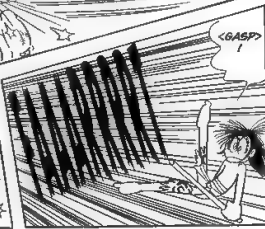
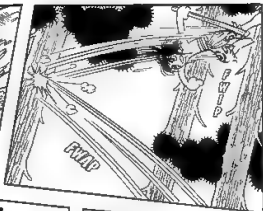
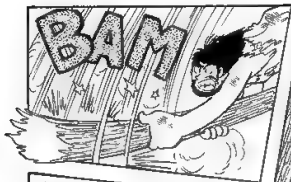


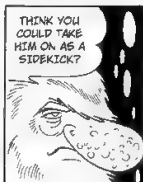
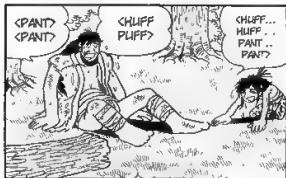


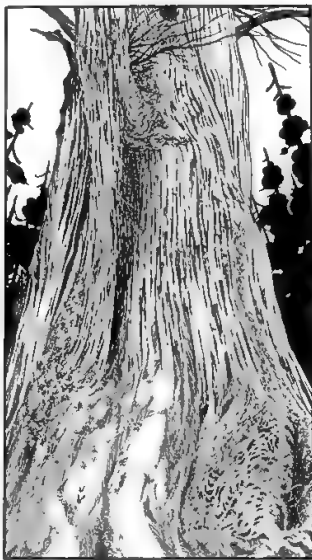




*SMALL STONE STATUES OF JIZO, THE BUDDHIST PATRON SAINT OF CHILDREN, ARE FOUND THROUGHOUT THE JAPANESE COUNTRYSIDE









GOSH,
WHERE'RE
YOU TAKING
US?

I HAVE SOMETHING
TO SHOW YOU
BOTH BUT
ESPECIALLY YOUNG
USHIWAKA.

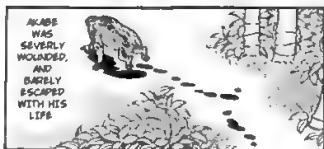
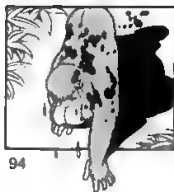
FOR AN OLD CODGER,
THE OL DOBBLIN SURE'S
HASN'T LOST A STEP.

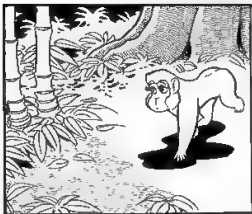
WHOSE
GRAVES
ARE
THESE?

WELL
AKABE
WAS THE
NAME OF A
MONKEY
AND
SHIROBE
THE NAME
OF A DOG.

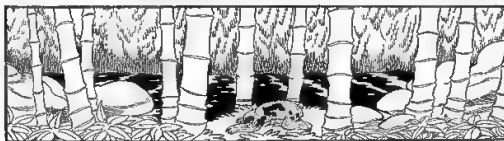
WHAT'S
THIS? IT
SAYS
"AKABE"
AND
"SHIROBE"

RESTING PLACE OF AKABE
RESTING PLACE OF SHIROBE





AKABE STILL HOPED
TO EVENTUALLY
RETURN TO THE
MOUNTAIN, WHERE
HE WOULD TRY
AGAIN TO DEFEAT
THE BLACK MONK
AND WIN BACK HIS
SWEETHEART





I TOOK
AKABE
BACK TO MY
HUT AND
TREATED
HIS
WOUNDS.
AND HE
EVENTUALLY
CAME TO
TRUST ME.

HE FELT SAFE
IN MY HOME
AND BECAME
PART OF THE
HOUSEHOLD.

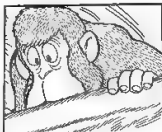


...

THEN ONE DAY, I
PICKED UP A STRAY
WHITE PUPPY AND
BROUGHT HIM
HOME, TOO...

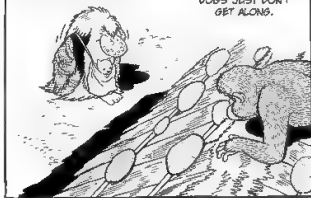


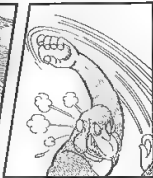
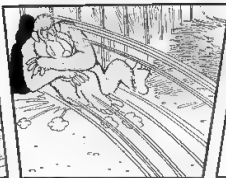
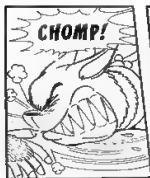
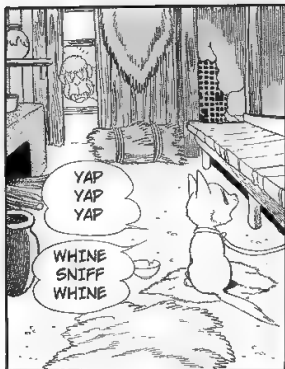
GOING!

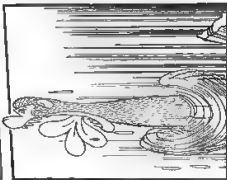
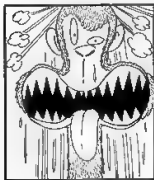
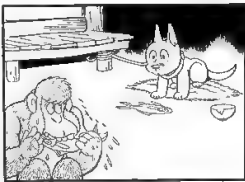
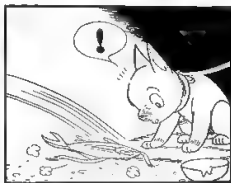
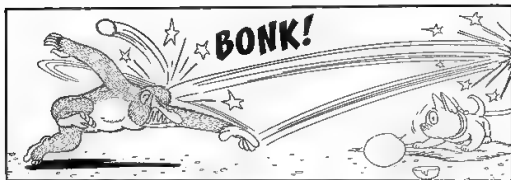


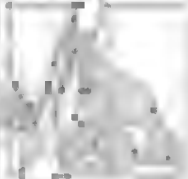
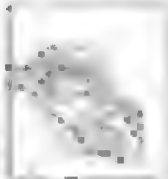
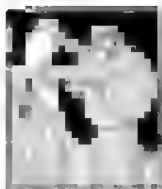
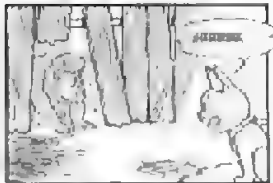
THAT'S WHEN ALL THE
TROUBLE STARTED.

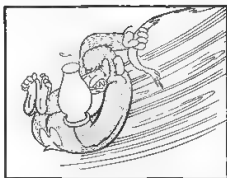
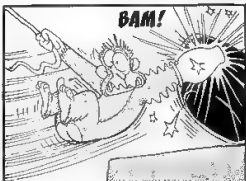
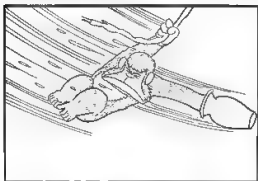
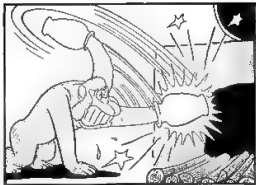
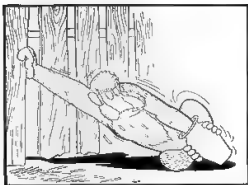
MONKEYS AND
DOGS JUST DON'T
GET ALONG.







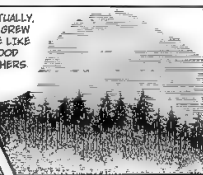


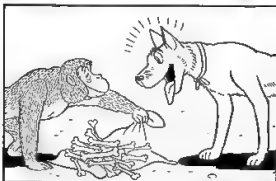


FINALLY,
AFTER ALL
THE
FIGHTING...

.. THE TWO
MANAGED TO
LEARN TO
TRUST EACH
OTHER. AND
EVEN **HELP**
ONE ANOTHER.

EVENTUALLY,
THEY GREW
TO BE LIKE
BLOOD
BROTHERS









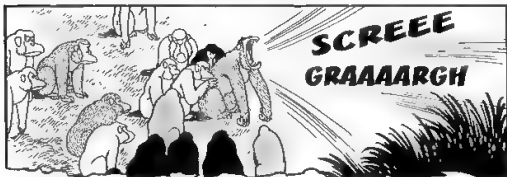


AKABE'S PLAN SUCCEEDED. HAVING SHIROBE APPEAR AT JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT DISTRACTED THE BLACK MONK FOR AN INSTANT, GIVING AKABE THE CHANCE TO STRIKE AT HIS THROAT. IT WAS OVER IN A FLASH, AND WITH THIS VICTORY, AKABE REGAINED POWER OVER HIS MOUNTAIN HOME.





THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN AKABE AND SHIROBE THIS BROUGHT GOOD FORTUNE TO AKABE... EVEN AFTER AKABE BECAME BOSS OF HIS CLAN AGAIN, HE WOULD OFTEN RETURN TO MY HUT AND REKINDLE HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH SHIROBE...



GOSH, THAT'S AN AMAZING RELATIONSHIP...

BUT EVEN THOUGH THEY LEARNED TO TRUST ONE ANOTHER SO WELL, ONE YEAR LATER THEY BOTH DIED, THEIR JAWS LOCKED AROUND EACH OTHER'S THROATS.



Y...YOU MEAN THEY KILLED EACH OTHER?

B. BUT WHY?

DID THEY HAVE SOME KIND OF FALLING OUT?



SO YOU MEAN DOGS 'N MONKEYS

...JUST DON'T GET ALONG, HUH?

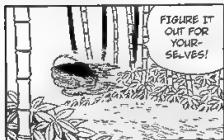


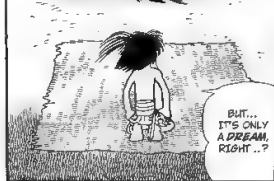
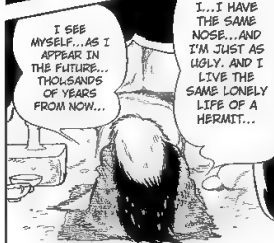
NO, NOT QUITE ...

THERE WAS ANOTHER REASON...



THEY WERE BOUND BY A DEEPER FATE. THE FATE OF REINCARNATION AND THE CYCLE OF BIRTH AND REBIRTH...

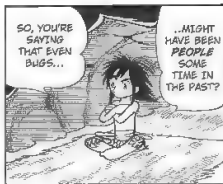






MY MASTER IN THOSE DAYS TOLD ME THAT ALL LIVING THINGS ARE REBORN AFTER THEY DIE.

BUT A PERSON DOESN'T NECESSARILY COME BACK AS A HUMAN IN THE FUTURE. HE MIGHT BE EVEN BE REBORN PERMANENTLY AS A BUG.



SO, YOU'RE SAYING THAT EVEN BUGS...

...MIGHT HAVE BEEN PEOPLE SOME TIME IN THE PAST?



MAYBE. OR MAYBE NOT.



I FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE ...

IT SOUNDS LIKE A JOKE



WELL, I.

...I BELIEVE IN MY DREAMS.

AND I'D LIKE TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO RETURN TO THE WORLD OF HUMANS AGAIN.



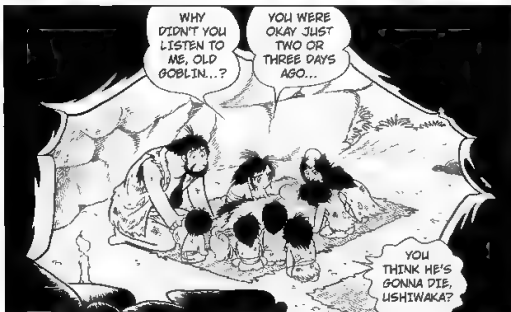
WELL, WISH WHAT YOU WANT. BUT DON'T GET TOO WRAPPED UP IN SOME BAD DREAM, OLD MAN.

YOU'LL GET TOO DISTRACTED AND THAT'LL BE IT FOR YOU. SO BE CAREFUL, OKAY?



HEH...WHAT DO I CARE ABOUT ETERNITY...?

ALL I WANT IS TO DESTROY THOSE SNOOTY OLD BLUE BLOODS IN THE TAIRA GOVERNMENT. THAT'S ALL!







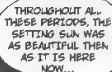
THE TIME
WHEN MY
TWISTED SOUL
CAUSED ME TO
KILL PEOPLE. .



..THE TIME
WHEN I
TRAVELED
THROUGHOUT
JAPAN WITH
MY MASTER. .



..THE TIME I
LOST MY ARMS
AND CAME TO
LIVE HERE
ON KURAMA
MOUNTAIN. .



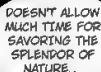
THROUGHOUT ALL
THESE PERIODS, THE
SETTING SUN WAS
AS BEAUTIFUL THEN
AS IT IS HERE
NOW...



ALL OF YOU
MUST LIVE
LIKE THAT
SUN...

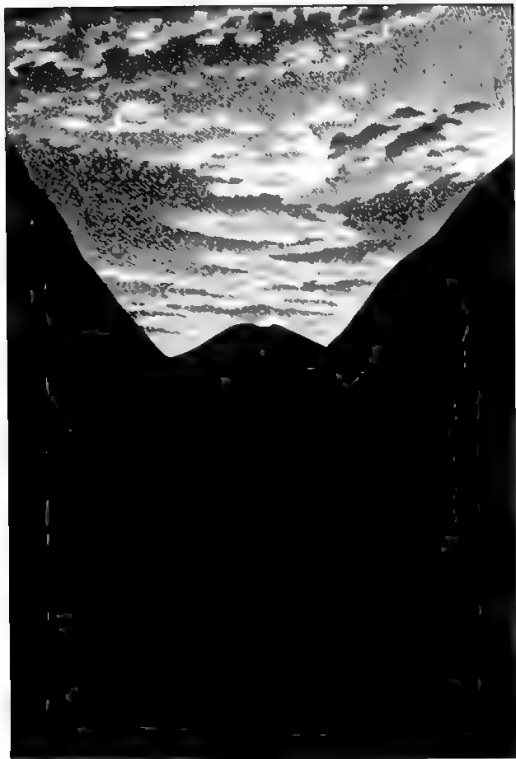


THE EBB
AND FLOW
OF HUMAN
LIFE...

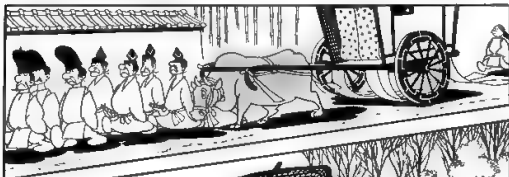
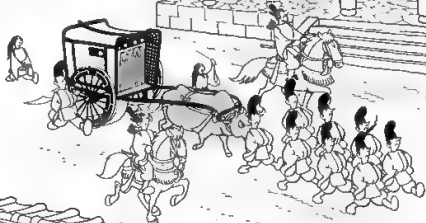


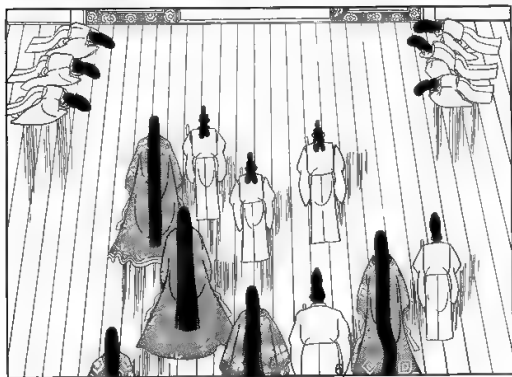
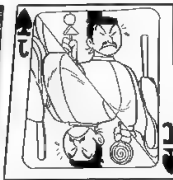
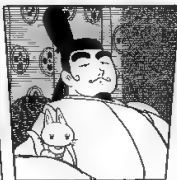
DOESN'T ALLOW
MUCH TIME FOR
SAVORING THE
SPLENDOR OF
NATURE. .

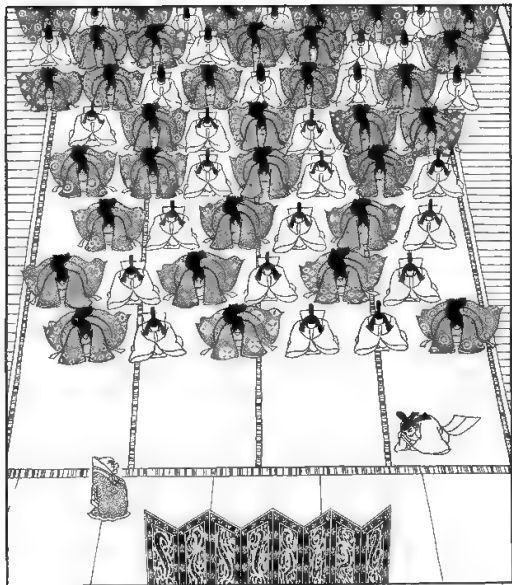


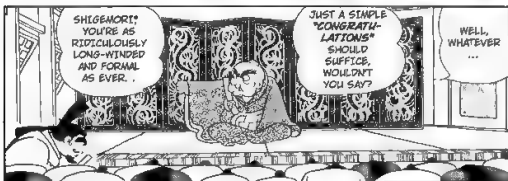


FIRST
MONTH
OF THE
YEAR
1176 A.D.



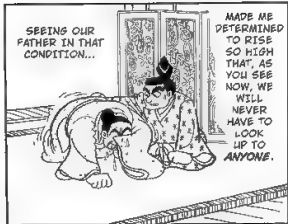
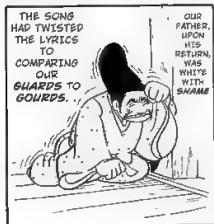
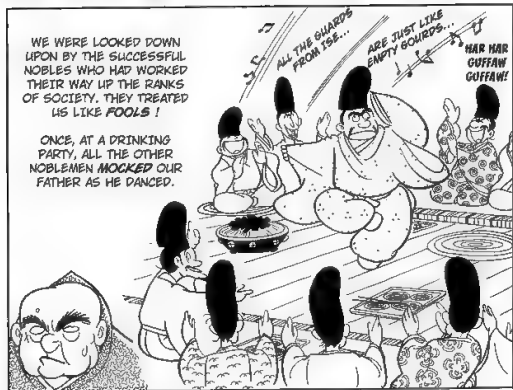






*NOTE TAIRA NO TOKITADA, KIYOMORI'S YOUNGER BROTHER
 TAIRA NO SHIGEMORI KIYOMORI'S ELDEST SON,
 TAIRA NO MINAMOMORI KIYOMORI'S SECOND SON.





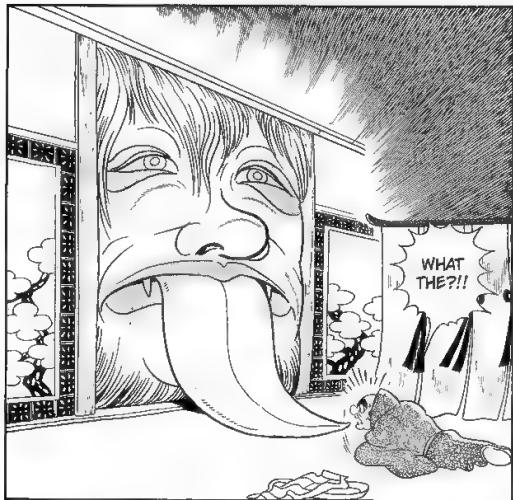


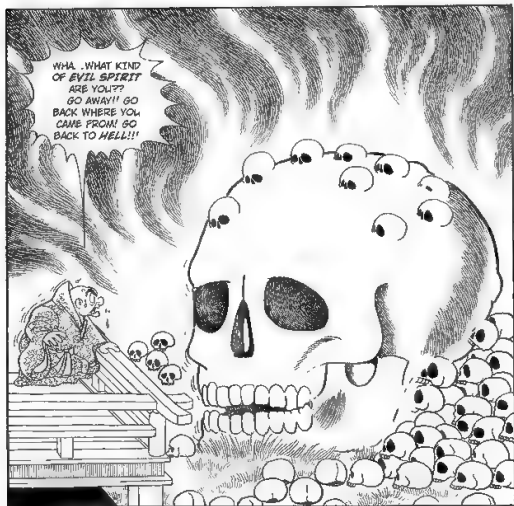
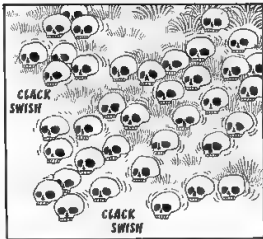


THE ONLY REASON
I WENT TO ALL
THE TROUBLE OF
SENDING YOU
TO THE EMPEROR
WAS TO MAKE
SURE OUR FAMILY
PRODUCED A
PRINCE!











NO...
EVIL
SPIRITS...
AGGHH...



YOUR
LORDSHIP...
ARE YOU
UNWELL...?



W..
WATER,
PLEASE



GAG...



I...I THINK
I SAW THAT
DREAM
AGAIN...

DID IT LOOK
LIKE I WAS
HAVING ANOTHER
NIGHTMARE ?

YES, YOUR
LORDSHIP.



I SEE THIS SAME DREAM
TOO OFTEN.. **SKULLS**
ARE PILED UP IN THE
GARDEN. AND THEY
LAUGH AT ME, RIGHT
IN MY FACE

AND WHY, OF
ALL DAYS,
WOULD I HAVE
THIS DREAM
AGAIN ON NEW
YEAR'S DAY?



YOU
MUST BE
TIRED,
MY
LORD ..

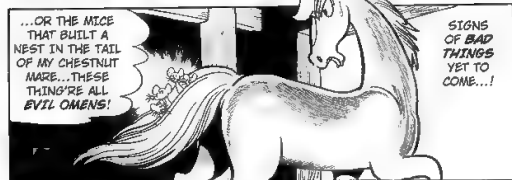
NO...

THIS IS
AN EVIL
OMEN. .



I HAD
A DREAM
INTERPRETER
AT THE
SHINTO
SHRINE
ANALYZE IT
FOR ME.

HE SAID IT
FORETOLD
GREAT DANGER
FOR THE
CLAN. AND
WHAT'S MORE,
HE SAID THAT I
WOULD DIE
BEFORE IT
COMES...







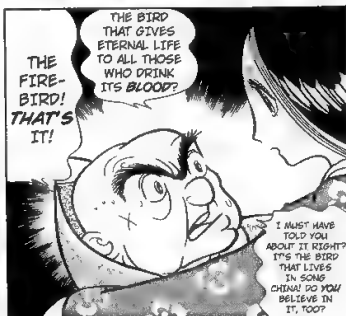
AHHH...
THIS
FEELS
GOOD.

YOUR TOUCH
IS AS SOFT
AND WARM
AS THE
FEATHERS
ON A BIRD'S
BREAST...



THAT'S
IT...!

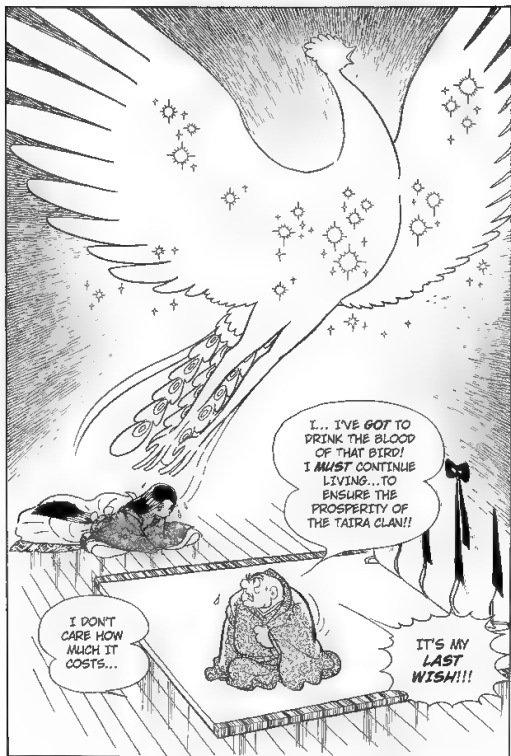
I JUST
REMEM-
BERED!



THE
FIRE-
BIRD!
THAT'S
IT!

THE BIRD
THAT GIVES
ETERNAL LIFE
TO ALL THOSE
WHO DRINK
ITS BLOOD?

I MUST HAVE
TOLD YOU
ABOUT IT RIGHT?
IT'S THE BIRD
THAT LIVES
IN SONG
CHINA! DO YOU
BELIEVE IN
IT, TOO?



AGGHHH!

SOMEONE!
BRING ME
SOME LIGHT!

I NEED
LIGHT!!

SOUNDS LIKE
THE MASTER'S
TALKING IN
HIS SLEEP
AGAIN!

I'LL BET
HE'S HAD
ANOTHER
NIGHTMARE
...

WHAT
TIME
IS IT?

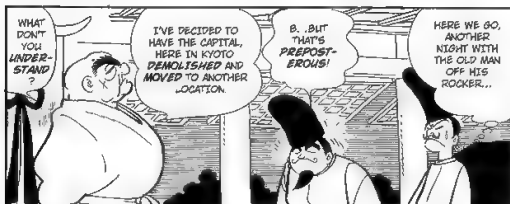
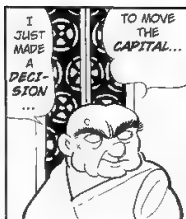
FOUR IN
THE
MORNING,
SIRE!

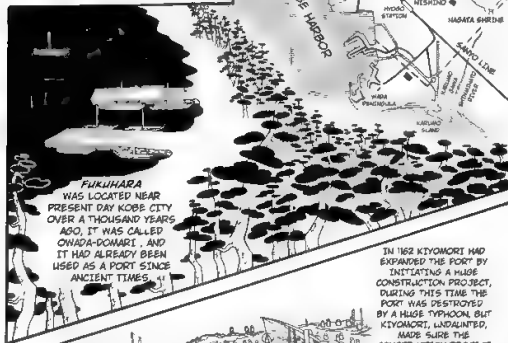
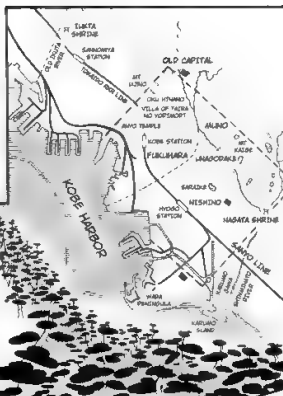
VERY WELL
WAKE EVERYONE
UP AND HAVE
THEM ASSEMBLE
IMMEDIATELY!

GET
TOKITADA AND
MINEMORI...
OH YES, AND
SHIGEMORI
TOO!

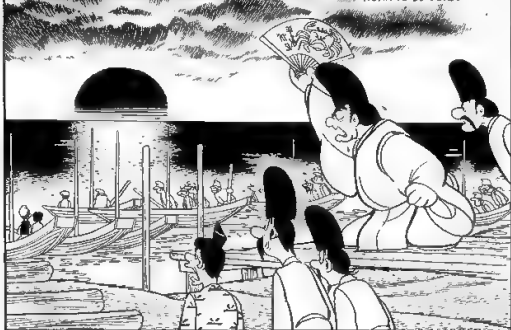
SEND SOMEONE TO ROUST THEM! I
WANT THEM HERE *RIGHT AWAY*! TELL
THEM I HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT
ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE!

YESSIR!!





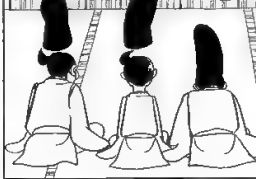
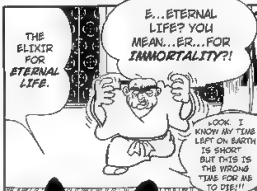
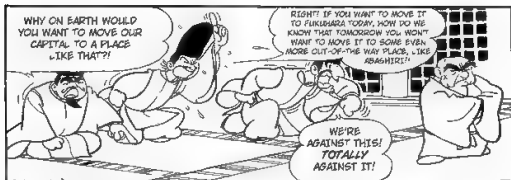
THE EXPANSION OF THE PORT WAS APPARENTLY CARRIED OUT AT A FANATICAL PACE. ACCORDING TO ONE LEGEND, WHEN THE CONSTRUCTION WAS ALMOST COMPLETED KIYOMORI WAVED HIS FAN AT THE SETTING SUN, IMPLORING IT TO GIVE THE WORKERS MORE TIME TO WORK. THE SUN IS SAID TO HAVE RISEN THE EQUIVALENT OF ANOTHER THREE FINGERS OF HEIGHT, ALLOWING ENOUGH TIME FOR THE REMAINING WORK TO BE DONE.



SHIPS FROM THE SONG, IN CHINA, MADE FREQUENT TRIPS TO THE PORT, AND KIYOMORI MADE GOOD USE OF THIS TRADE, ENCOURAGING COMMERCE WITH HIS ASIAN NEIGHBOR.

STILL, AT THE TIME NO ONE IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS WOULD HAVE DREAMED THAT FUKUHARA COULD ONE DAY BECOME THE NATION'S NEW CAPITAL.







THE FATE OF
OUR ENTIRE
CLAN RESTS
ON MY
SHOULDERS.

SO WHAT
DO YOU
THINK
WILL
HAPPEN
IF I DIE?

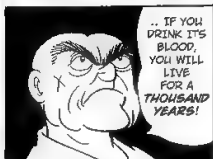
WE'D PROBABLY
DISINTEGRATE,
RIGHT?

WELL, I CAN'T
LET THAT HAPPEN!
THAT'S WHY
I MUST KEEP
ON LIVING!



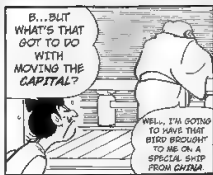
I'VE HEARD A LEGEND ABOUT A BIRD OF
ETERNAL LIFE--A "**FIREBIRD GODDESS**"--
THAT LIVES SOMEWHERE IN THE
MOUNTAINS OF CHINA. WHAT'S MORE,
I'VE HEARD THAT THIS AMAZING
CREATURE ACTUALLY EXISTS

IN FACT
ACCORDING
TO A
FAMOUS
SCHOLAR
NAMED
TAMORI

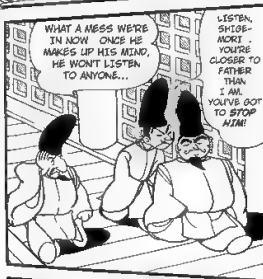
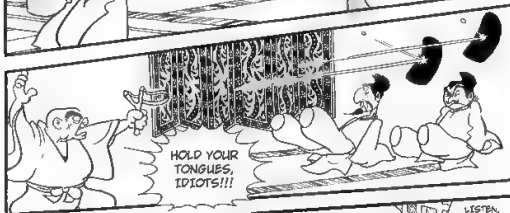
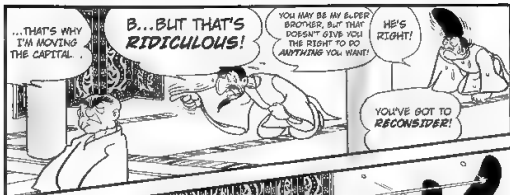


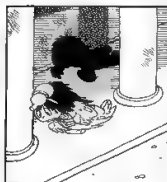
.. IF YOU
DRINK ITS
BLOOD,
YOU WILL
LIVE
FOR A
THOUSAND
YEARS!

B...BUT
WHAT'S THAT
GOT TO DO
WITH
MOVING THE
CAPITAL?



WELL... I'M GOING
TO HAVE THAT
BIRD BROUGHT
TO ME ON A
SPECIAL SHIP
FROM CHINA.









OH, MY..
TELL ME THEN, WHERE
IS BENTA? HE STILL
REMEMBERS ME DOESNT
HE? PLEASE, TEL.. ME!
I MUST KNOW!

HMPH. NOW ALL
OF A SUDDEN,
YOU'RE TURNING
SENTIMENTAL
ON ME...



LISTEN, HAVE
YOU GOT ANY
IDEA HOW
MUCH
TROUBLE
BENTA HAS
GONE TO, TO
FIND WHERE
YOU ARE?



HE'S BEEN
STOPPING
SAHURAI ON
GOJO BRIDGE
EVERY NIGHT!!

WELL, I'M
NOT EXACTLY
HERE
BECAUSE I
WANT TO BE,
EITHER...



WHY DIDN'T YOU
RUN AWAY, THEN?!
YOU COULD HAVE
WALKED RIGHT OUT
OF HERE IF YOU
WANTED!

LISTEN..THIS IS
THE HOME OF TAIRA
KIYOMORI, THE
HEAD OF STATE. DO
YOU REALLY THINK I
COULD JUST WALK
OUT OF HERE?



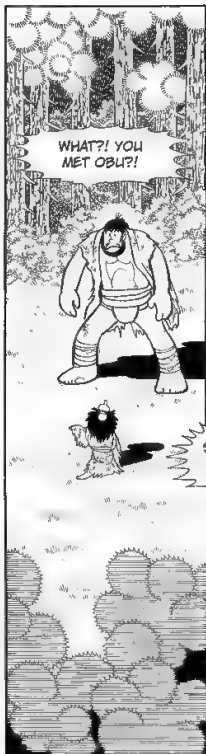
NO
MATTER
WHERE
I
RAN...

..THEY
WOULD
HAVE
FOUND ME
AND
BROUGHT
ME BACK...



AND
BESIDES...
LORD
KIYOMORI
HAS TAKEN A
PARTICULAR
INTEREST
IN ME..





WHAT?! YOU
MET OBU?!

W...WHERE
IS SHE?!!



BLAST
IT!!



STOP, BENTA!
YOU CAN'T GO NOW!

SHADDUP,
GOLIRD-
HEAD!



I'VE GOTTA
GET HER BACK
RIGHT AWAY!!

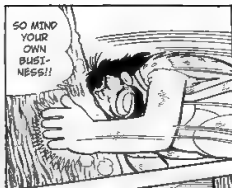


WHAAP!



HOW FAR DO YOU THINK YOU'LL GET, BENTA, TRYING TO BREAK INTO KIYOMORI'S ESTATE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT? COOL DOWN A BIT, PAL.

HEY, THIS IS MY PROBLEM, NOT YOURS! YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO!



SO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!!



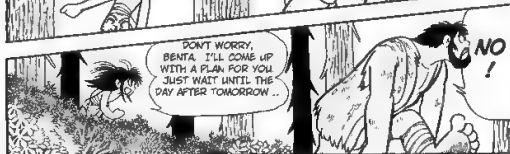
COME ON, BENTA... WISE UP!



FIRST OF ALL, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET INTO HIS PALACE, EH? AND EVEN IF YOU GET IN, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO FIND OBU?

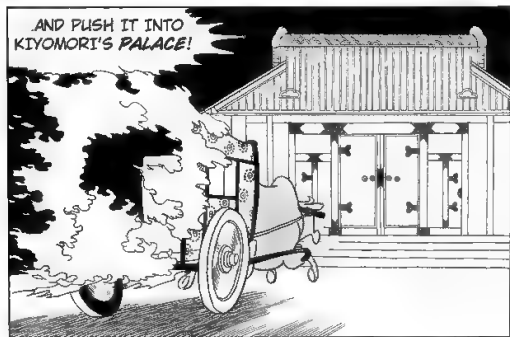
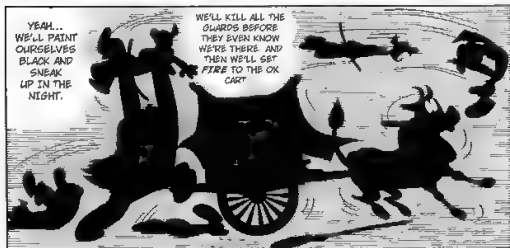
SEE WHAT I MEAN? IF YOU'RE GONNA FIGHT, YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE A PLAN! SOME KIND OF STRATEGY!

YEAH, BUT I'M NOT TOO GOOD AT THE THINKING STUFF..



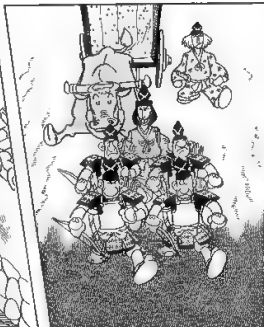
DON'T WORRY, BENTA. I'LL COME UP WITH A PLAN FOR YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW...

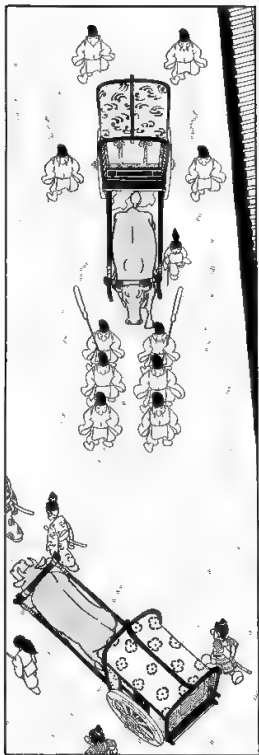
NO!

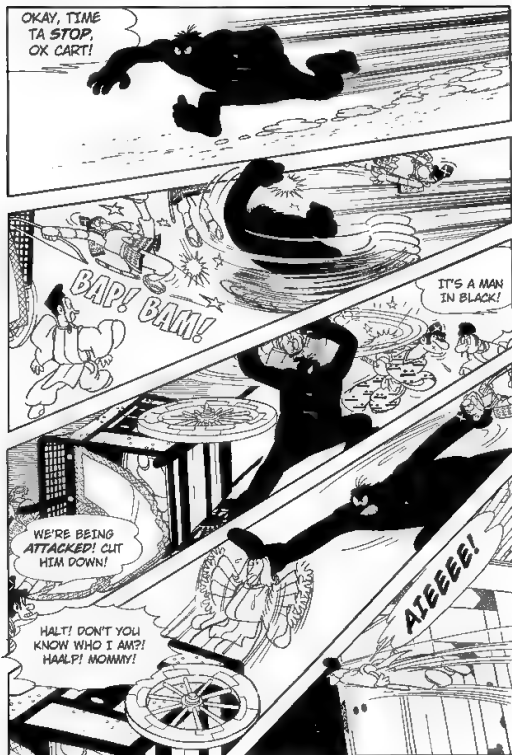












BLOP!

OOMPH!

UM, YOUR LORDSHIP .
AT THE OINOGO GATE, UM, WHEN MASTER SUKEMORI WAS RETURNING FROM FALCONING. .

..UM...A STRANGE **BLACK FIGURE** FROM REGENT FUJIWARA MOTOFUSA'S RETINUE WENT **BERSERK** AND **ATTACKED THEM...** MASTER SUKEMORI'S TAKEN REFLOE IN HIS QUARTERS...

WHAT!? **ATTACKED MY NEPHEW?**

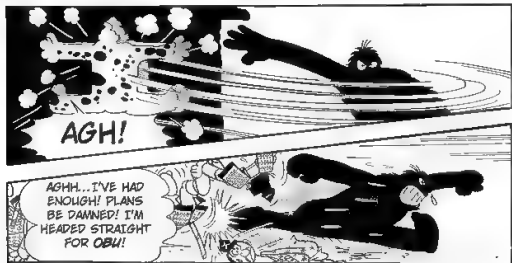
MY OWN **NEPHEW?** DISHONORED IN FRONT OF MY OWN HOME!!?

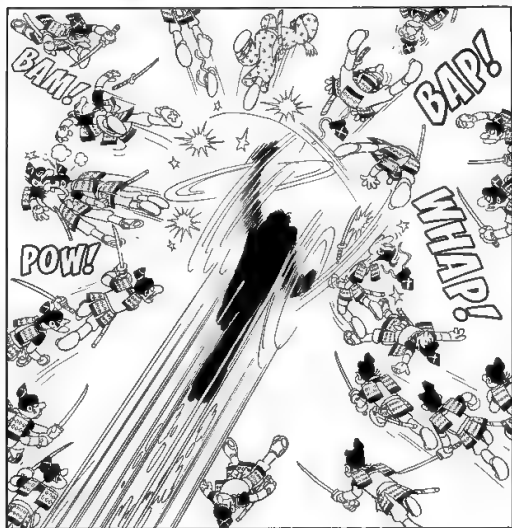
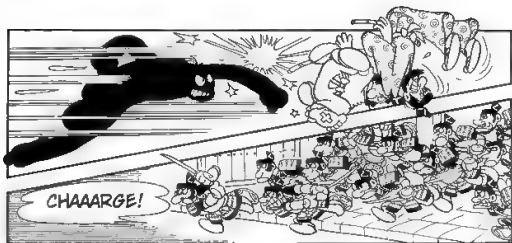
DON'T LET MOTOFUSA'S GOVERNMENT CART GET AWAY!! AND MAKE SURE EVERYONE IN HIS RETINUE RECEIVES A GOOD BEATING!

ALL RIGHT, MEN! WE'RE GETTIN' **REVENGE** FOR MASTER SUKEMORI!

HEY! W...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! THIS IS HIS EXCELLENCY **MOTOFUSA'S OX CART!**

SHUT UP AND TAKE YOUR BEATING!





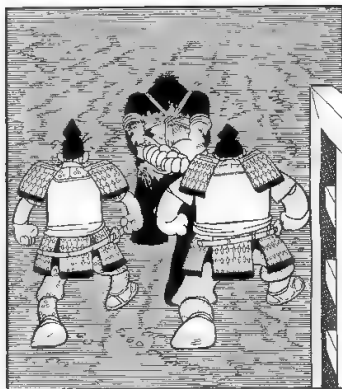






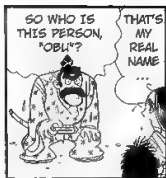












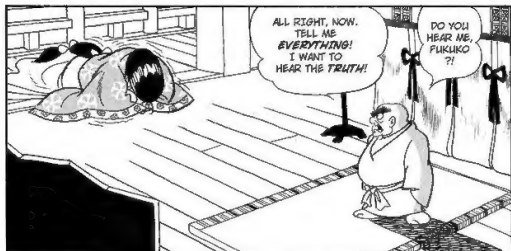


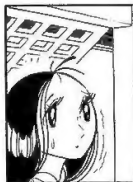




FUKUKO...
TELL
ME...JUST
WHO IS
THIS MAN?







*SHIRABYOSHI: A "PROFESSIONAL" PEANUT DANCER WHO NORMALLY DRESSED IN WHITE, HENCE THE NAME SHIRA (WHITE) BYOSHI (DANCER).



WHAT?!



YOU DO WANT
ME TO SPARE
HIS LIFE,
DON'T YOU?

WELL, THE
PRICE IS YOU
CUTTING HIM
OUT OF YOUR
LIFE!

SWEAR
THAT YOU'LL
NEVER SEE
HIM AGAIN!
THAT YOU'LL
GIVE HIM UP
FOREVER!



I WANT YOU
TO BE *MINE*,
FUKUKO, ALL
MINE...



I DON'T WANT
TO SHARE
YOU WITH
ANYONE ELSE.

YOU'RE TO
BE MINE
AND MINE
ONLY,
UNDER-
STAND?



I DON'T
HAVE LONG
TO LIVE...
SO UNTIL
I DIE...
I WANT
YOU BY MY
SIDE...

UNDERSTAND?
I FEEL BETTER,
JUST HAVING
YOU NEAR ME...

